

Message Text

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ORIGIN AF-06

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 EA-10 NEA-10 IO-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00

DODE-00 PM-03 H-02 INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-02

PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-15 OMB-01 AID-05 ACDA-10

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TO AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO

INFO AMEMBASSY ABU DHABI

AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

AMEMBASSY BANGKOK

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

AMEMBASSY BLANTYRE

AMEMBASSY CAIRO

AMEMBASSY CANBERRA

AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN

AMEMBASSY COLOMBO

AMEMBASSY DACCA

AMEMBASSY DAR ES SALAAM

AMEMBASSY DOHA

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

AMCONSUL HONG KONG

AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

AMEMBASSY JAKARTA

AMEMBASSY JIDDA

AMEMBASSY KABUL

AMCONSUL KARACHI

AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU

AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM

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AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR

AMEMBASSY KUWAIT

AMEMBASSY LISBON

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMCONSUL LOURENCO MARQUES
AMEMBASSY LUSAKA
AMEMBASSY MANAMA
AMEMBASSY MANILA
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY MUSCAT
AMEMBASSY NAIROBI
USMISSION NATO
AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI
AMEMBASSY PARIS
USLO PEKING
AMEMBASSY PORT LOUIS
AMEMBASSY PRETORIA
AMEMBASSY RANGOON
AMEMBASSY ROME
AMEMBASSY SANA
AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE
AMEMBASSY TANANARIVE
AMEMBASSY TEHRAN
AMEMBASSY TEL AVIV
AMEMBASSY TOKYO
USMISSION USUN NEW YORK
AMEMBASSY VALLETTA
AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON
USCINCEUR
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BEIRUT ALSO PASS BAGHDAD; MILADDEES ALSO FOR POLAD

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TAGS: PFOR, MARR, SO US

SUBJECT:SENATOR BARTLETT'S PRESS RELEASE ON BERBERA TRIP

FOLLOWING IS TEXT OF NEWS RELEASE FROM SENATOR BARTLETT
JULY 6, 1975:

SENATOR DEWEY BARTLETT (R-OK) HAS JUST RETURNED FROM A
THREE-DAY FACT-FINDING MISSION TO BERBERA, SOMALIA. AT THE
INVITATION OF THE SOMALI GOVERNMENT, SENATOR BARTLETT
HEADED A 10-MAN TEAM COMPOSED OF STAFF MEMBERS OF THE SEN-
ATE APPROPRIATIONS AND ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEES AND
TECHNICAL EXPERTS FROM SEVERAL SOURCES THAT WENT TO INVEST-

IGATE ALLEGATIONS MADE BY THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE THAT BERBERA WAS THE LOCATION OF "MAJOR SOVIET SUPPORT FACILITIES". THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE HAD RELEASED AERIAL PHOTOGRAPHS OF BERBERA AT A JUNE 10, 1975, HEARING BEFORE THE SENATE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE CONCERNING PROPOSED U.S. EXPANSION OF THE NAVAL FACILITY AT DIEGO GARCIA IN THE INDIAN OCEAN. THESE PHOTOGRAPHS ALLEGEDLY SHOWED SOVIET SHIPS, A NEW MAJOR SOVIET COMMUNICATIONS FACILITY, AN EXPANDING OIL STORAGE AREA, A MISSILE STORAGE AND REPAIR FACILITY, AND A LARGE RUNWAY UNDER CONSTRUCTION. BOTH THE

SOMALI AND SOVIET GOVERNMENTS HAVE DENIED THAT THERE ARE ANY SOVIET FACILITIES AT BERBERA. SENATOR BARTLETT'S STATEMENT FOLLOWS:

"THE PURPOSE OF OUR TRIP, WHICH WAS MADE IN RESPONSE TO AN INVITATION BY THE SOMALI GOVERNMENT, WAS TO VISIT THE LOCATION OF THE ALLEGED SOVIET FACILITIES AT BERBERA, SOMALIA, AND DETERMINE, TO THE BEST OF OUR ABILITY, THE VALIDITY OF THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE CLAIMS THAT THE SOVIET UNION WAS DEVELOPING A SIGNIFICANT MILITARY CAPABILITY AT BERBERA.

"LET ME SAY AT THE OUTSET THAT WE RECEIVED EVERY COURTESY AND CONSIDERATION FROM THE SOMALI GOVERNMENT. SOME MEMBERS OF THE TEAM AND I MET ON TWO OCCASIONS WITH PRESIDENT SIAD AND OUR CONVERSATIONS WERE CORDIAL AND FRANK. BEFORE DEPARTING FOR BERBERA, HE GUARANTEED OUR UNCLASSIFIED

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PARTY FREE ACCESS TO SEE ANYTHING WE WANTED AT BERBERA.

"OUR OFFICIAL TEAM CONSISTED OF TEN MEMBERS INCLUDING A PROFESSIONAL STAFF MEMBER FROM THE SENATE APPROPRIATIONS COMMITTEE AND ONE FROM THE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE. TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE TO EVALUATE OUR OBSERVATIONS CAME FROM SEVERAL SOURCES. I HAD LINGUISTS FROM THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS, FROM A CIVILIAN UNIVERSITY, AND FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE. THERE WERE EXPERTS ON COMMUNICATIONS, MISSILES, AND PORT FACILITIES FROM THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE. I ALSO HAD A PHOTOGRAPHER WHO WAS PERMITTED TO PHOTOGRAPH NEARLY EVERYTHING WE SAW. IN ADDITION WE WERE PERMITTED TO HAVE SIX MEMBERS OF THE AMERICAN AND FOREIGN PRESS ACCOMPANY US.

"WE DEPARTED FOR BERBERA FROM MOGADISCIO EARLY ON THE MORNING OF JULY 4, 1975. WE TRAVELED TO HARGEISA BY SOMALI AIRCRAFT AND FROM HARGEISA TO BERBERA BY A SOMALI-PILOTED, SOVIET-BUILT HELICOPTER, CIRCLING THE BERBERA AREA BEFORE WE LANDED. WE ARRIVED IN BERBERA ABOUT 9:00 A.M. AND OUR VISIT LASTED FOR ABOUT SIX HOURS.

"OUR FIRST STOP WAS AT THE FUEL FACILITY. WE WERE PERMITTED UNRESTRICTED ACCESS AND ALLOWED TO PHOTOGRAPH ANYTHING WE WANTED. THE NINE FUEL TANKS UNDER CONSTRUCTION WERE OBVIOUSLY OF SOVIET DESIGN AND SOVIET CONSTRUCTION MATERIAL.

"FROM THE FUEL TANK FARM WE WALKED TO THE PIER AREA AND WERE GIVEN COMPLETE ACCESS TO ALL PIER FACILITIES UNTIL WE CAME TO THE SOVIET BARRACKS SHIP. THIS SHIP, WHICH FLEW

THE SOVIET FLAG, WAS TIED TO THE PIER. IT HAD A RUSSIAN SAILOR IN UNIFORM AT THE TOP OF THE GANGWAY. I MADE A REQUEST THROUGH MY RUSSIAN LINGUIST TO COME ABOARD AND WAS DENIED PERMISSION. ALTHOUGH CAUCASIANS WERE SEEN ON THE DECK OF THE BARRACKS SHIP AS WE FLEW IN AND SOME WERE SEEN THROUGH PORTHOLES, THERE WAS AN OBVIOUS EFFORT TO KEEP ANY RUSSIANS OUT OF SIGHT.

"WE LEFT THE PIER AREA AND WENT TO THE BARRACKS AND UNCLASSIFIED

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TRAILER HOUSING AREA. HERE AGAIN, WE HAD COMPLETE ACCESS TO THE FACILITIES AND COULD PHOTOGRAPH ANYTHING. OUR SOMALI ESCORTS DESCRIBED THE TRAILERS AS "RUSSIAN" HOUSING AND THE BARRACKS AS "RUSSIAN AND SOMALI FAMILY" HOUSING. WE SAW SOVIETS IN THE TRAILERS AND SOMALIS AND SOVIETS APPARENTLY LIVING IN THE BARRACKS.

"FOLLOWING THIS STOP WE WENT BY VEHICLE TO THE AREA IDENTIFIED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE AS A COMMUNICATIONS RECEIVER SITE. BEFORE WE APPROACHED THE FACILITY THE SOMALIS DIRECTED THAT NO PHOTOGRAPHS BE TAKEN. WE STOPPED NEAR A GATE GUARDED BY SOMALIS IN WHITE NAVAL UNIFORMS. AT THAT TIME WE WERE ADVISED BY A SOMALI ESCORT OFFICIAL THAT THIS WAS A SOVIET FACILITY AND THAT WE COULD NOT ENTER. THE SOMALIA GUARDS CONFIRMED THIS. HE SAID THAT THE SOMALIS SHARED THE FACILITY AND THAT, ON TWO OCCASIONS, HE HAD REQUESTED OF THE SOVIETS THAT WE BE PERMITTED TO ENTER, BUT HIS REQUEST HAD BEEN DENIED.

"FROM THIS POINT WE DROVE TO THE COMMUNICATIONS TRANSMITTER SITE AND WERE AGAIN REFUSED PERMISSION TO ENTER WITH THE SAME EXPLANATION THAT THIS WAS A SOVIET FACILITY. BOTH THE TRANSMITTER AND RECEIVER SITES WERE OBSERVED FROM A DISTANCE AND THEY APPEAR TO BE POWERFUL, LONG-RANGE, SOVIET COMMUNICATIONS FACILITIES.

"AS WE LEFT THIS FACILITY, A SOMALI OFFICIAL ADVISED ME THAT ONLY FOUR OTHERS OF THE TEAM AND I COULD VISIT WHAT WAS DESCRIBED BY THE DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE AS A MISSILE HANDLING AND STORAGE FACILITY AND THAT THERE WOULD BE NO PHOTOGRAPHS PERMITTED. WE DID VISIT THIS NEARLY COMPLETED

FACILITY UNDER THESE RESTRAINTS. AGAIN THIS FACILITY WAS GUARDED BY SOMALIS IN WHITE NAVAL UNIFORMS AND ONLY SOMALIS WERE OBSERVED. INSIDE THE FACILITY WE WERE SHOWN BUNKER AREAS AND A LARGE BUILDING NEARING COMPLETION. WE CONFIRMED THAT THE FACILITY WAS DESIGNED FOR MISSILE STORAGE, CHECKOUT, AND ASSEMBLY. THE FACILITY WAS OBVIOUSLY BUILT BY THE SOVIETS.

"OUR FINAL VISIT WAS TO THE NEW AIRFIELD AND THE ENTIRE PARTY WAS PERMITTED TO GO. WE CONFIRMED THE CONSTRUCTION UNCLASSIFIED

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TO BE A LARGE AIRPORT FACILITY CAPABLE OF HANDLING ANY KNOWN AIRCRAFT WITH PREFABRICATED BUILDINGS UNDER CONSTRUCTION. THE AIRPORT APPEARED TO BE SEVERAL MONTHS AWAY FROM OPERATIONAL STATUS WITH THE NATURE AND AMOUNT OF SUPPORT FACILITIES NOT FULLY DETERMINABLE.

"WE DEPARTED BERBERA ABOUT THREE P.M. AND RETURNED TO MOGADISCIO BY SOMALI AIRCRAFT. THE FOLLOWING MORNING I MET AGAIN WITH PRESIDENT SIAD, TO TELL HIM WHAT WE HAD SEEN, AND TO THANK HIM FOR HIS MANY COURTESIES.

"IN SUMMARY, I BELIEVE OUR VISIT WAS EXTREMELY SUCCESSFUL. OF COURSE, WE HAVE NOT HAD THE OPPORTUNITY TO ANALYZE COMPLETELY WHAT WE HAVE SEEN, AND TO MAKE FINAL CONCLUSIONS BUT I DO HAVE SOME PRELIMINARY OBSERVATIONS.

"FIRST, DURING THIS APPEARANCE BEFORE THE SENATE ARMED SERVICES COMMITTEE ON JUNE 10, 1975, SECRETARY OF DEFENSE SCHLESINGER SAID, "IT IS EVIDENT THAT THE USSR IS IN THE PROCESS OF ESTABLISHING A SIGNIFICANT NEW FACILITY, CAPABLE OF SUPPORTING THEIR NAVAL AND AIR ACTIVITIES IN THE NORTHWEST INDIAN OCEAN". OUR TRIP ABSOLUTELY CONFIRMS THIS CONTENTION. THE FACILITIES WE SAW WERE OF SOVIET DESIGN; SOVIET CONSTRUCTION TECHNIQUES, MATERIAL AND EQUIPMENT WERE USED; THERE WERE A SUBSTANTIAL NUMBER OF RUSSIANS IN THE AREA DESPITE ATTEMPTS TO REMAIN HIDDEN FOR THE MOST PART. SECOND, THE SOVIETS CONTROL THE LONG-RANGE COMMUNICATION RECEIVER AND TRANSMITTER SITES AS WELL AS THE BARRACKS SHIP. IN ADDITION, COMMON SENSE, COUPLED WITH OUR OBSERVATIONS, INDICATES THAT THE SOVIETS HAVE ACCESS TO A SIGNIFICANT MISSILE HANDLING FACILITY AND WILL SOON HAVE ACCESS TO A MAJOR AIRPORT. COLLECTIVELY THESE AND OTHER FACILITIES NOT PREVIOUSLY KNOWN TO US REPRESENT A SIGNIFICANT CAPABILITY.

"FINALLY, THE SOMALI GOVERNMENT IS OBVIOUSLY INTERESTED IN IMPROVING ITS RELATIONS WITH THE UNITED STATES. UNDER TRYING CIRCUMSTANCES THEY APPEARED QUITE CANDID WITH ALL MEMBERS OF THE TEAM. IN FACT, I AM GOING TO PREPARE A SEPARATE REPORT ON THE REFUGEE SITUATION IN SOMALIA THAT

ADDRESSES PART OF THIS OBSERVATION. I BELIEVE THAT OUR
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COUNTRY SHOULD EXPLORE THIS OPPORTUNITY TO IMPROVE THE
RELATIONS BETWEEN THE UNITED STATES AND SOMALIA, WHICH, IF
SUCCESSFUL, COULD BE MUTUALLY ADVANTAGEOUS." INGERSOLL

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BLANTYRE
CAIRO

CANBERRA
CAPE TOWN
COLOMBO
DACCA
DAR ES SALAAM
DOHA
THE HAGUE
HONG KONG
ISLAMABAD
JAKARTA
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